

State Representative • 22nd District
Brendan Williams
Majority External Relations Leader



2008 Legislative Report



Contact Information:

132F Legislative Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
360-786-7940

E-mail: williams.brendan@leg.wa.gov

Toll-free Hotline: 800-562-6000

Brendan's Committee Assignments:

- Commerce & Labor
- Judiciary
- Rules
- Transportation

For an up-to-date list of all bills I am working on, please go to:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/House/Williams/SponsoredBills.htm>

Dear Neighbor:

The short 60-day legislative session is underway.

Just prior to the session I was appointed to the House Transportation Committee. With the transportation budget strapped, I'll fight to maintain Thurston County's fair share.

Between Sen. Karen Fraser, Rep. Sam Hunt, and I, our district is now fully represented on the operating budget, capital budget, and transportation budget committees. That's rare.

Governor Gregoire has proposed a fiscally-responsible supplemental budget that leaves a record \$1.2 billion in reserve, even after fully restoring former Senate budget chair Dino Rossi's cuts to children's health care and education.

Proposed new state spending includes smaller investments such as \$8 million to further hold sex offenders accountable and support victims, and \$8 million toward improving patient safety. Larger investments include as much as \$77.5 million to respond to the December flood crisis and \$31.2 million for teachers (who will still be underpaid).

It's a solid blueprint, but I think we can do a bit more and still save for the future. To put \$1.2 billion in savings into perspective, the Bush Administration's budget averages \$1.45 billion in deficit spending every day!

State governments are being asked to do more precisely because so many federal tax dollars are being wasted in Iraq (in just one case, \$9 billion went missing in Baghdad from 40 plastic shrink-wrapped pallets of \$100 bills, weighing 30 tons).

Over \$400 billion has been spent on the Iraq War. Some economists now estimate that the total cost may end up being between \$1-2 trillion. Meanwhile we have huge battles to wage here at home that require federal funding – whether actually investing in education instead of just engaging in empty sloganeering (“No Child Left Behind”); solving health care accessibility issues, especially for children denied care by President Bush's veto pen; or, as last summer's tragic Minnesota bridge collapse revealed, fixing aging infrastructure.

Even assuming that responsible democracy can be brought to a country (and region) that has never enjoyed it, our nation is not bringing in the revenue to create that democracy while also preserving our own. When did fiscal responsibility cease to matter? And how long can state governments (which must balance their budgets) absorb, in piecemeal fashion, the cost of bills that go unpaid by our federal government?

In his farewell address, George Washington, who knew something about war, warned of excessive entanglement with any other nation, even though he foresaw that “[r]eal patriots who may resist . . . are liable to become suspected and odious, while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.”

Following you'll find highlighted a sampling of a few issues I'm taking a lead on. Please always feel free to contact me, with the best means being e-mail at williams.brendan@leg.wa.gov.

Best Regards,

Brendan Williams
State Representative
22nd Legislative District

Serving Those with Disabilities

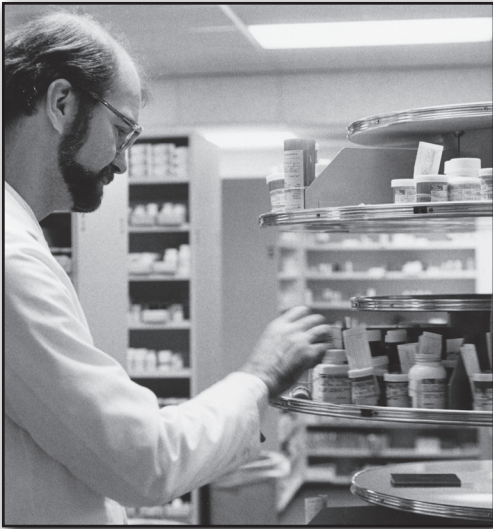
A priority of mine remains training medical students – our next generation of physicians – to work with patients that have developmentally disabilities. Studies have demonstrated that many current physicians, with the general exception of pediatricians, feel ill-equipped to deal with the unique needs of developmentally disabled patients. We should support education at the University of Washington Medical School to ensure these patients receive the care and sensitivity their needs require.

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Some Issues I’m Taking a Lead On

Update on pharmacy patients’ rights

It’s interesting how we can decry intolerance abroad and tolerate it here. For example, until last month, a Saudi Arabian rape victim faced a public lashing for having been a victim. Outrage here in America prompted the Saudi king to “pardon” her.



Locally, a rape victim would be denied a lawful “morning after” contraceptive by the state-licensed pharmacy at Ralph’s Thriftway. Yet some defend this as a business decision.

Unlike Saudi Arabia, America is not a theocracy. And government licensure is permissive, not a right. Where government licenses health care we should expect science-based medicine – and not subjective moral condemnation – will be dispensed.

Although the Bush Administration frequently distorts science to serve conservative ends, even it was forced to admit the Plan B contraceptive absolutely cannot cause abortions. Yet some pharmacy owners – untrained in medicine themselves – consider their judgment superior to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration and the medical community.

As an editorial headline in the conservative Tri-City Herald read, “Reluctant druggists should go job hunting.” The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, in an editorial entitled “Self-righteous snit,” observed, “To be clear, these pharmacists aren’t balking at handing out Viagra.” It noted that Plan B “is not an abortive drug. It’s a form of birth control. That’s what science tells us and if a pharmacist can’t respect or understand that, then he or she has no business dispensing medication to a trusting public.”

This is a precedent that can affect all time-sensitive drugs. Because the Arizona-based extremist organization spearheading litigation over this issue openly calls for discrimination against gays and lesbians – going so far as to claim that the brutal murder of Matthew Shephard was not hate-based – I’m very concerned pharmacy patients might next face denial of life-saving HIV drugs.



Indeed, numerous medications could be “vetoed” by extremist pharmacy owners for whom medical facts are irrelevant. One study found cases where allowing exemptions to a duty for care harmed “[c]ancer patients, pregnant women, patients near death and rape victims[.]”

I’ll fight legislatively to put sound medicine and *patients’* rights first.

Supporting Rural Law Enforcement



I recently drove 275 miles to Omak and listened to the concerns of small-town police chiefs and town council members about the toll that losing officers to larger, better-paying jurisdictions takes upon rural Washington. In a grassroots effort led by Okanogan County Clerk Jackie Bradley, and supported by small towns across Washington, I have been asked to introduce legislation to address this issue. As state legislators we need to be responsive to the concerns of all state residents, and I’m hoping to build a bipartisan legislative coalition to better support rural law enforcement. The quality of public safety in Washington should not be dependent upon where you live.

Fighting to Save Our Environment

With the Bush Administration utterly indifferent to the environment and global warming, the Washington Legislature in 2005 adopted California’s clean vehicle emissions standards. Eleven other states followed this lead.

Very modestly, given that a December NASA climate projection was that summer arctic ice may completely disappear in 5 years, our law required emission reduction beginning in 2009 for a 30% reduction in new cars by 2016. On December 19, President Bush’s EPA administrator overruled a unanimous recommendation from the EPA’s legal and scientific staffs and rejected the California standards – overturning our law.



Our Earth is literally in the balance. Only far-right groups like the building industry lobby still flatly deny climate change’s existence (and all other environmental concerns).. We need leadership, not denial or surrender. My 5-year-old son’s future is at stake.

As Gov. Gregoire noted, “Washington can’t wait for permission to do the right thing for our environment and future generations.”

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OF PRINTING 98501

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